

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cleaning agent for cleaning a surface of an object to be cleaned by producing collision between the cleaning agent and the object, the cleaning agent comprising:

a plurality of particulate bodies made essentially of a material selected from the group consisting of gelatin and animal glue;

water contained in the particulate bodies to impart viscosity and elasticity thereto; and

a plurality of stick-free fragments held on an outer surface of each of the particulate bodies, the stick-free fragments serving to prevent the individual particulate bodies from sticking to one another due to the viscosity thereof and to maintain the particulate bodies in an original shape thereof;

wherein the cleaning agent is used under conditions where the particulate bodies maintain the viscosity and the elasticity by retaining the water therein so that the cleaning agent can capture a foreign material on the surface of the object with the aid of the viscosity of the particulate bodies.

2. The cleaning agent according to claim 1, wherein the individual particulate bodies have a particle size of

0.1 mm to 3 mm in diameter.

3. The cleaning agent according to claim 2, wherein the stick-free fragments are made of a ceramic material.

4. The cleaning agent according to claim 3, wherein the individual stick-free fragments have a diameter of 1 μm to 20 μm .

5. The cleaning agent according to claim 3, wherein the ceramic material includes at least one substance selected from the group consisting of diamond, silicon carbide, alumina, glass and zirconia.

6. The cleaning agent according to claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of the particulate bodies to the water falls within a range of 10:2 to 10:7.

7. The cleaning agent according to claim 1 further comprising an anti-evaporation substance for preventing evaporation of the water, the anti-evaporation substance being contained in the particulate bodies.

8. The cleaning agent according to claim 7, wherein the anti-evaporation substance is water-soluble oil.

9. A cleaning method for cleaning a surface of an object to be cleaned by using a cleaning agent which comprises a plurality of particulate bodies made essentially of a material selected from the group consisting of gelatin and animal glue, water contained in the particulate bodies to impart viscosity and elasticity thereto, and a plurality of stick-free fragments held on an outer surface of each of the particulate bodies, the stick-free fragments serving to prevent the individual particulate bodies from sticking to one another due to the viscosity thereof and to maintain the particulate bodies in an original shape thereof, said cleaning method comprising the steps of:

causing the cleaning agent to collide with the object under conditions where the particulate bodies retain the water;

capturing a foreign material on the surface of the object with the aid of the viscosity of the particulate bodies; and

removing the foreign material from the surface of the object.

10. The cleaning method according to claim 9 further comprising the steps of:

washing the surface of the object which has undergone the steps of claim 9 through a wet-cleaning process performed by using a chlorofluorocarbon-replacing material; and

drying the surface of the object.

11. The cleaning method according to claim 10, wherein the foreign material on the surface of the object is a magnetic material, and the cleaning agent once used for cleaning the object is brought close to a magnet to remove the foreign material from the cleaning agent and reused in further cleaning operation.